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THE HARRISON ANTINARCOTIC LAW.

A CONVICTION FOR SHIPPING OPIUM IN INTERSTATE COMMERCE AND FOR HAVING POSSESSION OF SMOKING OPIUM.

A case recently decided by the United States District Court for the Western District of Tennessee illustrates some of the difficulties encountered by drug addicts in securing narcotic drugs.

An opium addict living in Tennessee induced a friend in Louisiana to procure and send to him a shipment of opium prepared for smoking. Neither of the parties had registered under the Harrison anti-narcotic law. The opium addict was charged with violating the Harrison law by procuring the shipment of opium in interstate commerce, and also, under the Federal law of January 17, 1914, with unlawful possession of smoking opium. He was convicted on both charges.

The opinion of the court is published in this issue of the Public Health Reports, page 1089.

BACTERIUM TULARENSE.

INFECTED JACK RABBIT FOUND IN MONTEREY COUNTY, CAL.

Dr. M. T. Clegg, bacteriologist in charge of the Federal laboratory at San Francisco, Cal., makes the following report regarding a jack rabbit found infected with the *Bacterium tularense* in Monterey County, Cal.:

A jack rabbit which was received at this laboratory on March 25, was found to be infected with *Bacterium tularense*. The rabbit had been found dead on a ranch 7 miles southwest of Soledad, Monterey County.

Dr. William B. Wherry, of the University of Cincinnati, reported an extensive epizootic of this plague-like disease among rabbits in Indiana (Public Health Reports, vol. 29, p. 3387). Wherry and Lamb (Journal Infectious Diseases, 1914, vol. 15, p. 331) also reported two cases of human infection, both of which occurred in persons known to have handled wild game (rabbits).

In this State (California) the disease is not uncommon among ground squirrels, as has been reported by McCoy and Chapin, who were the first to observe the disease and isolate the infecting organism, to which they gave the name *Bacterium tularense*.

This plague-like disease has never been observed heretofore in the rabbits of California. It will be of interest to note if an epizootic occurs among the rabbits in the district in which this rabbit was found.

Wherry and Lamb were able, by placing an infected rabbit in a runway with 15 other rabbits, to infect 5 out of the 15. They believed this result to be due to gastrointestinal infection.

SOME FALLACIES REGARDING PHENOL.

A REVIEW WITH REPORTS OF OBSERVATIONS ON THE INFLUENCE OF ETHYL ALCOHOL ON THE GERMICIDAL AND ON THE TOXIC PROPERTIES OF PHENOL.

By MARTIN I. WILBERT, Technical Assistant, Hygienic Laboratory, United States Public Health Service.

There are probably few official drugs regarding which more misleading statements have been made than phenol, or, as it is more widely known, carbolic acid. This substance was first recognized by Runge (1834), who called it carbolic acid to indicate its nature and origin; an oil-like liquid, obtained from coal, that has much in common with well-known acids. Phenol was early confounded with creosote, isolated by Reichenbach (1832) from beechwood tar, and under the name coal-tar creosote an impure commercial phenol was long listed and freely sold to less well-informed dealers, who unknowingly substituted this more poisonous commercial product for beechwood creosote for internal use.

With the advent of crystalline phenol and its subsequent use as an antiseptic in surgical practice, better informed medical practitioners began to appreciate the difference between the two products, but even at the present time it is not uncommon to find commercial grades of phenol referred to as coal-tar creosote.

The widespread use of phenol as an antiseptic and a disinfectant by medical practitioners served to bring it to the attention of the laity as a poison, and as early as 1890 it was asserted that phenol or carbolic acid was employed more frequently by suicides than any other drug.

The toxicology of carbolic acid early attracted attention, and a record of the substances that have been recommended as antidotes for phenol poisoning, with a review of the reasons for recommending them, would be an interesting study in that it would tend to emphasize the futility of basing conclusions on incomplete or at times misleading observations.